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Small, local, open, connected: Cosmopolitan localism as a framework for sustainable fashion design

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Abstract

This paper explores how the principles of Cosmopolitan Localism, specifically the Small, Local, Open, and Connected (SLOC) framework, can be operationalised within sustainability-focused fashion design education. Drawing on a practice-based, qualitative research study conducted within an undergraduate fashion design programme at a South African university, the paper analyses a pedagogical intervention aligned with the global Fashion Revolution movement. The intervention included a three-week experiential learning module, the Fashion Revolution Designathon, and a campus-wide clothing swap event to embed ethical awareness, material circularity, and critical design thinking into the student learning experience. Rooted in the theoretical frameworks of transition design and post-growth sustainability discourse, Cosmopolitan Localism offers an alternative to globalised, extractive fashion systems by promoting small-scale, community-rooted innovation that remains open to global knowledge and networks. Through the SLOC lens, this project facilitated human-scaled, collaborative learning (Small), localised material engagement and cultural referencing (Local), open process documentation and public storytelling (Open), and alignment with international sustainability movements such as Fashion Revolution (Connected). The study draws from various qualitative data sources, including student reflections, visual artefacts, process journals, and lecturer observations. Findings indicate that students developed technical and conceptual competencies in sustainable design and demonstrated increased critical consciousness regarding fashion's socio-environmental impacts. By engaging in hands-on upcycling, cross-disciplinary collaboration, and public-facing presentation, students could situate their design practice within broader systemic conversations around justice, responsibility, and the future of fashion. This paper contributes to the field of design education by providing a replicable model for integrating SLOC principles into the curriculum through real-world, socially engaged projects. It also responds to the "Design of Social Change" conference theme by demonstrating how fashion education can be a powerful site for activism, ethical transformation, and community resilience. Ultimately, the research argues that embedding Cosmopolitan Localism into fashion pedagogy offers a meaningful pathway for cultivating the next generation of socially conscious, locally grounded, and globally connected designers.

Keywords: Cosmopolitan localism, SLOC, fashion education, sustainability, fashion revolution, pedagogy, experiential learning

Introduction

The fashion industry is increasingly under scrutiny for its environmental and social impacts. (Niinimäki *et al.* 2020). In response, educators are challenged to cultivate pedagogies that raise awareness and equip

students with tools for sustainable change. The global fashion industry is at a crossroads, with rising pressure to reconcile creativity and sustainability (Thomas 2020). In an era of climatic crises, ethical imperatives, and altering consumer values, fashion design must move beyond fast fashion models and towards more sustainable processes, incorporating global awareness and local rootedness (Daukantienė 2023). Cosmopolitan Localism, defined by its core principles of Small, Local, Open, and Connected (SLOC), provides a framework for the long-term integration of global trends with local culture, production methods, and social values (Manzini 2011). Cosmopolitan Localism, particularly through the SLOC model, offers a framework to balance global responsibility with local action. This paper investigates how these principles can be enacted within fashion education, using a Fashion Revolution campaign as a pedagogical intervention. This paper is guided by the research question: How can the principles of SLOC (Small, Local, Open, Connected) be operationalised in sustainability-focused fashion design education through experiential projects such as Fashion Revolution campaigns?

Theoretical framework: Cosmopolitan localism and SLOC

Ezio Manzini's concept of *Cosmopolitan Localism* presents a compelling framework for rethinking sustainability in both design practice and education. It promotes a deliberate shift from centralised, globalised mass production systems toward decentralised, human-scaled, and community-rooted practices that remain connected to global networks (Manzini 2011). Cosmopolitan Localism is not a rejection of global interdependence but a reconfiguration that privileges local diversity, participation, and self-reliance while embracing open knowledge exchange, technological innovation, and trans local solidarity.

This framework emerges from broader discourses in sustainable development, particularly as a counter-narrative to globalisation's homogenising and often extractive logics (Assibey, Chisin & Cronje 2019). It is closely aligned with principles from *transition design*, *post-growth theory*, and *degrowth economics*, all of which argue that true sustainability requires a systemic transformation of how we live, produce, and educate. In this sense, Cosmopolitan Localism is not only an ecological imperative but also a socio-cultural and pedagogical one, calling for design approaches that are ecologically regenerative, socially inclusive, and contextually grounded.

Manzini's model of SLOC – Small, Local, Open, Connected – distils the operational principles of Cosmopolitan Localism into a practical design and education framework. "Small" emphasises manageable, human-scaled systems and nimble, responsive, and often informal interventions. "Local" refers to valorising place-based knowledge, cultural traditions, and material practices. "Open" highlights the importance of transparency, accessibility, and knowledge-sharing, encouraging collaboration and democratic participation. Lastly, "Connected" stresses maintaining dialogue and exchange across borders, ensuring local actions contribute to global resilience and shared learning.

In the context of fashion design education, SLOC provides a valuable pedagogical lens through which students can engage with sustainability not as a fixed module or add-on, but as a systemic, situated practice. It reframes sustainability from a compliance-based objective to a design opportunity grounded in ethics, identity, and community (Bhamra & Hernandez 2021). This approach is particularly relevant for educational institutions in the Global South, where fashion design is often interwoven with inequality, cultural appropriation, resource limitation, and environmental degradation. By integrating SLOC principles into the curriculum, educators can foster a generation of designers who are both critical thinkers and compassionate practitioners, attuned to the complexities of the global fashion system and empowered to act locally to create positive change (Zeng 2020).

The SLOC framework emphasises:

- Small: Focusing on manageable, human-scale systems that are adaptable and resilient.
- Local: Prioritising place-based knowledge, materials, and traditions to foster cultural and ecological sustainability.
- Open: Encouraging transparency, knowledge sharing, and innovation through open-source practices.
- Connected: Linking local initiatives to global systems to ensure mutual learning, collaboration, and shared sustainability goals.

In the context of fashion design, these principles suggest a pathway towards sustainable production that respects cultural identities, reduces environmental impact, and creates networks of shared value across borders. As applied to sustainable fashion, cosmopolitan localism represents a synthesis of global perspectives and local identities (Darku & Akpan 2020). While cosmopolitanism often evokes notions of universality and interconnectedness, cosmopolitan localism underscores the importance of preserving and promoting regional cultural diversity (Kossoff 2019). This framework posits that sustainable fashion should address global environmental and social challenges, and respect and celebrate local cultural traditions (Manzini & M'Rithaa 2016). By combining a global outlook with a strong attachment to a particular place or community, Cosmopolitan Localism seeks to foster a sense of belonging to both a global community and a unique local context (Manzini 2010).

Cosmopolitan Localism is defined as this symbiotic relationship between different scales of everyday life, from local to global, which would combine two long-standing and distinct traditions – cosmopolitanism and localism– and serve as the foundation for a new type of social, cultural, political, and economic settlement (Moorhouse *et al.* 2017). The term Cosmopolitan Localism was first coined by Sachs (1999) in the 1990s, not only to address ecological catastrophe but to challenge "cultural evaporation" (Sachs 1999). Globalisation causes the loss of many ways of being human in the world. This concept is emerging from local communities and is the key focus of this study in a fashion context.

Methodology

A qualitative, practice-based research approach was adopted for this study, grounded in the principles of reflective pedagogy and action research. This methodological choice was informed by the aim to explore how the theoretical framework of Cosmopolitan Localism, particularly the SLOC model, could be translated into tangible educational experiences within sustainable fashion design education. The study was conducted in a South African university's fashion design programme and focused on a pedagogical intervention structured around Fashion Revolution Week 2025.

The central component of the research was an experiential, curriculum-integrated project titled the Fashion Revolution Designathon and Fashion Show, facilitated over 4 days with first- and second-year fashion design students. The intervention comprised multiple phases: conceptual research, collaborative design, garment production using upcycled materials, and public presentation through a fashion show and a campus-wide clothing swap. The initiative was co-designed by academic staff to simulate real-world design and sustainability challenges, encouraging students to investigate, ideate, and act upon ethical fashion concerns. In doing so, the project aligned with the global mission of the Fashion Revolution movement and provided a real-world testing ground for the SLOC principles within fashion education.

Data collection was multi-modal and included reflective observations by the lecturer-researcher, visual documentation of garments and presentations, student artefacts (such as lookbooks, mood boards, and process journals), student reflections, and informal post-project feedback sessions. Observations focused on student engagement, group dynamics, decision-making, and evidence of

critical thinking. Artefacts provided insights into how students interpreted and applied sustainability concepts, and the final outputs, garments and presentations, served as material evidence of learning. The clothing swap event, open to the entire institution and publicised through the internal newsletter, further contributed data on community engagement and institutional culture around sustainability.

In keeping with the qualitative, interpretivist paradigm, data were analysed thematically, notably how students' actions and outputs demonstrated the operationalisation of SLOC principles. The project thus served as both a teaching strategy and a research site, allowing for an in-depth examination of how sustainability education can be embodied through collaborative, creative, and context-sensitive learning. The findings emerging from this approach offer insight into curriculum design and broader questions of how fashion education can foster ethical, situated, and future-oriented designers.

Case study: Fashion revolution campaign in fashion design education

Project overview

The campaign invited second-year fashion design students to participate in the global "Who Made My Clothes?" movement. Students created their supply chains of garments, interviewed each other as local garment workers and tailors, and created digital and physical storytelling artefacts. They also attended workshops and talks on sustainability from industry experts and guest lecturers to better understand sustainability in fashion. They presented their findings through exhibitions, social media campaigns, and interactive class discussions.

This study employed a practice-based, experiential learning methodology in a South African university's undergraduate fashion design curriculum. The focal project was the “Fashion Revolution Fashion Show Designathon”, held from 22 to 25 April 2025, involving first- and second-year students. The project functioned as a pedagogical intervention aligned with the global Fashion Revolution movement and its sustainability, transparency, and ethical production values. Students participated in a time-bound, intensive design challenge that required them to conceptualise, develop, and present upcycled fashion looks. By grounding the learning experience in real-world fashion activism, the project allowed for applying design theory to pressing social and environmental issues.

Collaborative experiential learning

Students were organised into collaborative groups of five, fostering peer learning, creative dialogue, and teamwork. Each group was tasked with producing two commercially viable garments using only upcycled materials, such as second-hand clothes, textile offcuts, and discarded fabrics. This requirement foregrounded material constraints as a creative opportunity, aligning with the SLOC principle of “Small” by encouraging intimate, manageable group sizes and scaled-down production. The “Local” dimension was emphasised by sourcing materials from local contexts and referencing South African designers known for their sustainable and upcycled practices. By engaging in group ideation, hands-on garment construction, and iterative feedback sessions with lecturers, students navigated complex design problems in a supportive, reflective environment.

Open process and transparent communication

The openness of the project was embedded in both process and presentation. Each group documented their design journey, from initial sketches and mood boards to sourcing challenges and construction experiments. These artefacts were assembled into presentation boards and digital lookbooks, shared during the final showcase and on social media platforms. Students articulated their design rationales in short descriptive statements and verbal presentations to a judging panel, which included faculty and

industry professionals. This transparency mirrored the Fashion Revolution's ethos of "Who Made My Clothes?" by making visible the labour, intention, and material histories embedded in each garment. It also allowed for peer and public engagement with the students' sustainability narratives, fulfilling the "Open" and "Connected" dimensions of the SLOC framework.

Real-world engagement and reflection

The final presentations were not only academic assessments, but also public-facing exhibitions aligned with Fashion Revolution Week. Garments were modelled, styled, and evaluated based on creativity, market relevance, artisanry, and ethical storytelling. Through this, students gained first-hand experience communicating design values to diverse audiences, echoing the global-local dynamic central to Cosmopolitan Localism. The project culminated in reflective discussions that encouraged students to critically assess their assumptions about fashion production, sustainability, and the designer's role as an agent of change. These reflections were vital in reinforcing the integration of theory and practice, thereby supporting the research aim of understanding how the principles of SLOC can be operationalised in a sustainability-focused fashion education.

Institution-wide clothing swap: Community engagement and systems awareness

Complementing the designathon, a clothing swap event was organised as part of Fashion Revolution Week, expanding the pedagogical reach of the project beyond the Fashion Department. An open invitation was distributed via the institution's internal newsletter, welcoming all students and staff to participate. The swap occurred in a central campus space, and individuals were invited to bring gently used garments to exchange for others. This facilitated a participatory system of circular fashion that foregrounded the value of reuse over consumption. Students assisted in organising the event – curating items, managing logistics, and documenting the experience, providing them with expertise in community mobilisation and event coordination. The swap embodied SLOC's "Open" and "Connected" dimensions by inviting cross-disciplinary and institutional collaboration while creating awareness of sustainable practices in a real, accessible, and inclusive format. It reinforced the "Local" and "Small" aspects by focusing on immediate campus-scale interventions that contributed meaningfully to global sustainability goals. The event challenged traditional consumption patterns and fostered dialogue around personal responsibility, consumer behaviour, and the broader socio-cultural systems in which fashion operates.

Operationalising SLOC

The Fashion Revolution project provided a rich context for translating the abstract principles of Cosmopolitan Localism into tangible pedagogical strategies. The SLOC framework – Small, Local, Open, and Connected- was a conceptual lens and a practical design for structuring learning, collaboration, and community impact. Each principle was embedded into the initiative's design, delivery, and outcomes, illustrating how sustainability education in fashion can be grounded in real-world, value-driven practice.

Small: focusing on manageable, human-scale systems that are adaptable and resilient

The project was deliberately structured around small group work, with teams of five students tasked with producing two garments. This scale promoted focused collaboration, peer learning, and individual accountability. Students could develop meaningful, creative relationships, resolve design challenges collectively, and reflect on personal contributions. The "small" scale also allowed for agile decision-making and experimentation, which are often lost in large, bureaucratic curriculum models. The limited timeframe of the designathon further intensified the experience, encouraging decisive action and iterative problem-solving skills essential to sustainable practice in the fast-paced fashion industry. Essentially, "small" created a safe, intimate laboratory for ethical, reflective design.

Local: Prioritising place-based knowledge, materials, and traditions to foster cultural and ecological sustainability

The principle of "local" was operationalised through material sourcing, design inspiration, and stakeholder engagement. Students were required to upcycle used clothing and textile waste, often sourcing these materials from local donations, second-hand shops, or their wardrobes. This embedded the concept of circularity into the material base of their work and prompted critical engagement with waste streams in their immediate environment. Further, students were encouraged to research South African designers and upcycling initiatives, enabling them to situate their design concepts within local fashion narratives and aesthetics. The inclusion of the campus-wide clothing swap further deepened this connection by inviting the broader institutional community to participate in sustainable fashion practices. These localised interventions helped students see sustainability not as a distant ideal but as a tangible practice embedded in their communities, identities, and material culture.

Open: Encouraging transparency, knowledge sharing, and innovation through open-source practices

The openness of the project was manifested in both process and communication. Students documented their journey through mood boards, swatch collections, lookbooks, and process notes. These were shared during the final exhibition and, in some cases, published on social media platforms, inviting feedback and public engagement. Classroom discussions and peer critiques further nurtured a culture of openness and constructive dialogue. The judging panel, composed of lecturers and industry guests, encouraged students to articulate their design processes and ethical considerations clearly and confidently. Additionally, the clothing swap was an open forum where students and staff from various disciplines could interact and learn informally about sustainable fashion practices. This digital and physical openness mirrored the transparency championed by the global Fashion Revolution movement and helped foster a participatory learning environment rooted in accountability and shared growth.

Connected: Linking local initiatives to global systems to ensure mutual learning, collaboration, and shared sustainability goals

While the project was rooted in local materials and contexts, its connections were inherently global. The timing and theme aligned with the international Fashion Revolution Week, situating student efforts within a broader advocacy, critique, and ethical transformation movement. Students explored global supply chains, investigated the social and environmental impacts of fashion systems, and positioned their work within conversations around decolonisation, slow fashion, and social justice. Digital platforms allowed students to share their projects beyond the classroom, connecting them to online audiences, alums, and practitioners working toward similar goals. The "Connected" SLOC principle was thus operationalised as a two-way flow: global frameworks informed local practice, and local outputs contributed to global discourse. This interconnectedness helped students understand themselves as emerging designers and participants in a shared global responsibility for sustainable futures.

Longitudinal data on the lasting impact of these interventions

To enhance the case for curricular transformation and scalability, a longitudinal data study should be launched to monitor the long-term impact of the SLOC interventions. Follow-up data should be collected from students after graduation, perhaps at one-year and three-year intervals, to assess the project's long-term impact on their career choices, ethical design practices, and professional engagement with sustainability principles, for example, preference for circular design, use of local sourcing, or advocacy for transparency. By demonstrating that the SLOC framework leads to long-term behavioural change rather than being a one-time academic exercise, the study would provide strong evidence of the curriculum model's effectiveness, justifying its wider adoption and scaling across design disciplines and institutions.

Implementing the SLOC framework, Small, Local, Open, and Connected, made the Fashion Revolution project more than just an academic exercise; it became a comprehensive paradigm for value-driven curriculum development in sustainability education. The effort gave students a thorough and practical understanding of cosmopolitan localism by regularly incorporating these ideas into the project's designathon structure, material sourcing, knowledge sharing, and global alignment. The framework effectively served as a strong, scalable, and adaptable pedagogical blueprint, demonstrating how ethical and reflective design practices can be realistically integrated into fashion education to prepare future designers for responsible professional engagement in an ever-changing world.

Discussion

The project demonstrated that experiential learning grounded in the principles of Cosmopolitan Localism can significantly deepen students' critical engagement with sustainability. By embedding the SLOC framework into the structure of the Fashion Revolution campaign and related activities, students could move beyond abstract understandings of ethical fashion into practical, embodied, and reflective learning experiences. Unlike conventional classroom lectures on environmental impact or ethical supply chains, which can often remain theoretical, the hands-on nature of the designathon and clothing swap allowed students to directly confront real-world sustainability issues through a localised, creative lens.

Students were consistently challenged to make ethical design decisions based on available materials, time constraints, and peer collaboration. Working within the parameters of upcycling and limited resources, they had to critically assess their consumption habits, aesthetic assumptions, and the socio-economic implications of their choices. This required a shift in thinking: from linear to circular models, from individual authorship to collective creation, and from globalised fashion ideals to context-specific design solutions. SLOC's “small” and “local” aspects efficiently fostered this shift, as students experienced firsthand the value of designing within constraints and for their immediate communities.

The “open” nature of the project, encouraging documentation, public sharing, and group reflection, was instrumental in fostering transparency, creativity, and peer-to-peer learning. Students became active participants in a shared learning ecology, exchanging techniques, offering feedback, and articulating the narratives behind their designs. This openness increased their confidence and enabled them to view sustainable fashion as a dialogic process rather than a fixed outcome. Visual storytelling, social media, and verbal presentations helped students internalise the importance of communicating sustainability values in accessible and impactful ways.

The global connection by aligning the project with Fashion Revolution Week brought a sense of purpose and solidarity to the learning experience. Students recognised their work was part of a broader, international conversation on fashion activism and responsible design. This alignment bridged the gap between local action and global citizenship, reinforcing the SLOC principle of “connectedness”. It also validated the students’ efforts, helping them situate their work within a meaningful movement and motivating them to consider their potential roles as future change agents in the industry. The project highlighted how experiential, SLOC-informed learning can cultivate technical competencies in sustainable design, critical consciousness, ethical sensitivity, and systemic thinking. These are essential qualities for a new generation of fashion designers equipped to challenge and reimagine the current fashion paradigm.

While the SLOC framework proved highly effective, its implementation was not without significant logistical and resource-based challenges. The "Local" principle, which relied heavily on upcycled and donated materials, introduced inherent unpredictability in material quality, quantity, and variety. This

required students to spend significant time obtaining and preparing materials, which could lead to dissatisfaction and take attention away from key design responsibilities. Furthermore, the reliance on local community engagement for the clothes swap and material donations necessitated significant, unscheduled faculty and staff time for coordination, which may strain resources if the project were expanded without committed administrative assistance. The designathon's limited timeline, while encouraging "Small" and agile techniques, also put significant strain on students, underlining a trade-off between concentrated, intense learning and the necessity for introspective, methodical design processes commonly associated with real "Slow Fashion". Slowing down the pace may be required for greater incorporation of the framework's ethical decisions.

A second set of limitations revolved around the difficulty of measuring and sustaining the "Open" and "Connected" dimensions within a finite academic term. The "Open" principle required students to be vulnerable when discussing their process. Nonetheless, not all students were equally comfortable with public documentation and social media visibility, which could lead to unequal involvement and documentation quality throughout the group. More importantly, the "Connected" principle, which connects local designs to global supply chain analysis, was frequently constrained by the students' prior knowledge and access to complicated, real-world industry data. While they understood the abstract concept of global critique, developing truly unique, data-driven linkages was complex under the constraints of a short assignment. Maintaining the worldwide connection beyond Fashion Revolution Week proved challenging, necessitating a more integrated, year-long plan to keep students engaged with the international movement and its developing discourse.

Finally, the project encountered inherent pedagogical challenges in overcoming deeply ingrained conventional mindsets and aesthetics. Many students, raised in a culture of rapid fashion and global brand aesthetics, initially struggled to accept the constraints imposed by the "Small" and "Local" ideals. There was an apparent conflict between the ambition to create a 'professionally polished' garment from fresh, high-quality materials and the project's ethical mandate to work with salvaged, irregular, or discarded textiles. Overcoming this aesthetic bias required ongoing faculty intervention and reassurance, implying that a successful curriculum transformation necessitates a change in methods and a more profound, longer-term cultural shift in what students and the broader fashion curriculum value as quality, beauty, and success. Future iterations will require more scaffolding and explicit debate to deconstruct these widespread conventional standards.

Implications for curriculum design

The outcome of this project suggests that integrating SLOC-informed, experiential learning into fashion curricula holds significant potential for transforming sustainability education. The Fashion Revolution initiative's design and delivery exemplify how Small, Local, Open, and Connected principles can be intentionally applied to support deep, socially engaged learning. These pedagogical strategies do not merely enhance content delivery; they redefine the role of the design educator and the student as co-creators of knowledge embedded in specific practice contexts. By focusing on upcycled materials sourced from local environments, the project encouraged students to engage directly with the material realities of their communities. This place-based approach foregrounded sustainability not as a distant policy directive, but as an immediate, lived concern rooted in local waste streams, cultural narratives, and economic conditions. Such an approach aligns strongly with Cosmopolitan Localism's call for context-responsive design. It is particularly valuable for institutions situated in the Global South, where sustainability challenges are entangled with social justice, resource scarcity, and cultural heritage.

The project positioned students as active participants in addressing complex global issues through local action. Instead of following prescriptive briefs, students were invited to co-construct meaning, make ethical choices, and articulate their values through design. This approach nurtured agency, critical thinking, and reflexivity, capacities essential for responsible design practice. Students developed garments and negotiated meaning, collaboration, and ethics. As a result, the curriculum became a platform for social learning and personal transformation. The alignment with Fashion Revolution Week enabled students to connect their classroom experiences to a larger global movement. This link between the micro (individual student projects) and the macro (global systems change) enabled learners to understand the interconnectedness of local and global fashion systems. The SLOC framework thus served as a bridge, supporting students to act locally while thinking globally, a pedagogical stance critical in developing future-ready design practitioners capable of navigating the socio-ecological complexities of the 21st century.

The project also encouraged a breakdown of disciplinary silos. Through the clothing swap event -open to all departments and publicised institution-wide, students facilitated engagement with broader campus and community stakeholders. This aligns with SLOC's “Open” and “Connected” principles and shows how design education can catalyse dialogue, shared learning, and collaborative action. It also demonstrates the potential of fashion education to function as a socially transformative practice, advancing the conference theme of *Design for Social Change* by moving from isolated studio work to embedded, participatory learning experiences.

This paper directly addresses the theme of *Design of Social Change* by demonstrating how the curriculum can be a site of ethical transformation and collective empowerment. By operationalising SLOC principles in a real-world educational setting, the project shows how design education can act as an agent of cultural, environmental, and social change. This paper also addresses the subtheme of Design+ Sustainability and Future-Focused Design. The students’ experiences of upcycling, storytelling, and public engagement illustrate how sustainability in fashion is not only about materials or methods—it is about shifting mindsets and reimagining the fashion system through education. The study is academically sound, drawing on practice-based research methodologies and informed by theoretical frameworks from sustainability studies, design pedagogy, and cosmopolitan localism. It is grounded in qualitative evidence from multiple sources, including student reflections, artefacts, visual documentation, and project outcomes. The paper contributes to the field of design education by presenting a scalable, adaptable model for sustainability pedagogy rooted in real-world activism and systemic awareness. It offers concrete strategies for embedding social and ecological ethics into the curriculum and demonstrates how design can be both a mode of inquiry and a catalyst for change.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has shown that Cosmopolitan Localism, when applied through the SLOC framework, offers a theoretical foundation and a practical, transformative approach to sustainability in fashion education. The Fashion Revolution project demonstrated how small-scale, community-rooted, and globally aware learning interventions can engage students in ethical, critical, and systems-based thinking. Students were empowered to question dominant industry norms, connect with local resources, and contribute to broader global movements for change by situating design practice within real-world social and environmental contexts. As the fashion industry faces increasing pressure to address its impacts, embedding SLOC-informed pedagogies will be essential for equipping future designers with the values, skills, and agency to create more just and sustainable futures.

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